

guineas, on the safety and solidity of the buildings they are about to purchase, they would ensure a safer return for their capital, and would soon prove a barrier to the further progress of such dishonest and dangerous practices.

But another source for the spread of speculating building is one which, though less seen, and when observed is too often disregarded, is the practice of persons buying a piece of ground, and covering nearly its whole extent with the smallest and most wretchedly constructed houses for the poorer classes; ill-ventilated, single-hung sashes to the smallest window openings, small rooms, and a yard with the privy close to the back-door, and covering nearly its whole extent; these, built in the cheapest manner possible, are inhabited by persons who have the will, but not the power, to remove, being at the mercy of the hard-hearted landlord for arrears of rent; this class of speculators are the principal support of the present system, and are ably seconded by the scamping part of the building community; their reign, however, will soon draw to a close, thanks to the New Building Act.

I disagree, however, from your correspondent at p. 462; in his attempt to be facetious, he has fallen into error. The class of speculative builders will be found to include by far the greatest number of persons in the trade; and though there are some builders who for honesty and upright conduct are unexceptionable, yet they form so small a portion of the class, that they are in danger of being swamped by the host of under-price contractors and speculators who so plentifully abound. Instead of the present time being one favourable for the advancement of building, I can assure "W. T. B." that the present time is the worst for legitimate (if I may use the expression) building that has been known for many years. Go where you will, old established builders complain of no work; in fact, building, with a few exceptions, is almost at a stand-still, if we except the rows of houses springing up built by speculators, which are all taken under-price, in many cases builders of standing refusing to contract for them, with the prospect of being paid by a man of straw, and the houses mortgaged to their full amount. I would ask "W. T. B." why he objects to the use of stucco, and the shop-fronts being prettily painted? Though he uses it as a compliment, it bears the mark of sarcasm too strongly to pass unnoted, especially being preceded by the word "sepulchre." The other instance mentioned of his friend's house, proves not so much against the defective building as a bad choice of situation; at the same time, I think either the surveyor made a mistake in his valuation, or that "W. T. B." in order to make his case stronger, has overshoot the mark in the respective amounts. Perhaps your correspondent would explain the term chattering windows, an expression which to me is utterly unintelligible.

I hope that your correspondents will take up the matter of speculating building, and seriously exert themselves to put a stop to a system which, if it goes on much longer, will end in half the builders becoming insolvent, through a set of scamps, who, having very little credit themselves, will not suffer much by its loss. The effects will be far more serious to the honest man, who endeavours to maintain himself and his family in a respectable manner.

Sept. 9th, 1844. SCRUTATOR.

SIR.—A letter appears in your magazine of last week on the quality and quantity of material used in certain buildings; the remarks are very just, and apply to three-fourths of the buildings now erecting in the neighbourhood of the metropolis. But the fault does not rest where "G. T. B." lays it, but with the public themselves. The vast numbers of houses that have been built within the past ten years have not been required so much to meet the demand caused by increase in population, as by the rage for investment. The parties who wish to invest money seek for those houses that will produce the largest rental for the purchase; a really well-built house, producing 7 or 8 per cent., will not suit their purpose; they must make 10 or 12 per cent.; therefore the cheaper a house is run up, the greater rental will it produce; consequently a demand is created for that kind of building, and the

man who builds a substantial house, of good material and workmanship, must be content to keep his house on his hands. An additional facility is created for the disposal of the inferior property by its falling into the hands of auctioneer surveyors, who lend money on them, afterwards becoming agents for the sale. These men are appealed to for the value; this is not estimated by the cost of house, quantity of material, or workmanship, but only by the rental it will bring. Therefore, a good house, valued by a respectable builder or surveyor at 600*l.*, is, in their eyes, only worth 400*l.* or 450*l.* I have seen repeated instances of this. The builders are suffering at present from the laxity shewn by some district surveyors, owing to which a house may be built in one district for 100*l.* less than in another. There is one spot in which the bricks are put in with a mixture of mud and lime from sugar refineries, the term for which is "Billy Sweet;" and in another district the same is used, but omitting the (what was once) lime.

If the public will use the same discernment in purchasing houses they use in purchasing goods in a shop, there will soon be an end to the cheap building; but while purchasers are to be found for rubbish only, the builders of such rubbish are not to blame.

NOT A BUILDER, BUT A LOOKER-ON.

ADULTERATION OF WHITE LEAD.

SIR.—It is with full confidence that justice to the trade alone, if not another sentiment, will make you give room in your valuable columns to the following reply to a statement made by "Verax" in your last, on the adulteration of white lead, and colours used by house painters:—

That white lead is lowered by *barytes* or *chalk*, no person in the trade (who at least understands it) can dispute, for the best English lead you can purchase in the market, I have found, when ground, to contain three and one-sixth of *coak* or other ingredients to one of pure lead; and the very inferior lead, such as sold at 18*s.* per cwt., 7½ to one, which is mixed in water first (instead of being ground in oil as "Verax" states), then dried and ground in oil, which makes the dry white lead sold by colourmen as spurious, if so it may be called, as that ground in oil. It is absurd to think of having a genuine article at the price the common white lead is now sold at, and no respectable house painter, that understands his business, will purchase them to do even common work, as they are the most expensive in the end.

But as to colours of every description being adulterated with whitening, to be used by persons in the trade, is ridiculous indeed; it may do for little oil shops, &c., who sell cheap paints, but he must be a *tyro* who could not detect it; for if a house painter bought colours ground, it would not be compound colours, but the primitive ones, which, if adulterated, is easily detected by an inexperienced eye, much more by an old practitioner. It is not surprising either the white lead paints being marked up lower than the price of the genuine material, in these *puffing* times, when there is so much speculative building going on, and three perhaps out of four in the building line employ their own men, and often the employer and the employed know nothing of the nature of colours, but are obliged to trust to those that sell them, which, even if they are sold under the market price of blue lead, there would be a profit realised through the *vehicle* they are mixed with, which is often fish oil, and as great an evil as an inferior pigment.

There is no doubt but lead, with a portion of *barytes*, if well washed, is preferable to using lead alone for colour (but as to whitening, I should doubt, to any extent), and the resistance of certain gases which will destroy the colour of lead, but the drying quality depends on their being well washed from acid, and the *vehicle* they are ground or mixed with, linseed oil being *tardy* in drying through the small quantity of oxygen it contains, but by adding any substance that supplies it with oxygen remedies the defect.

Persons would not be victimised, did they employ persons competent to purchase the genuine article.

Mile End, September 8th.

R. H.

Miscellaneous.

HOLYROOD PALACE AND PARK.—Considerable improvements are at present going on at this ancient seat of royalty. Workmen are repairing the crown which surmounts the grand entry. The roof is also undergoing necessary reparations, as well as the Chapel Royal. But the greatest of all the contemplated improvements—namely, the draining of the irrigated meadows—has now commenced in earnest, and when completed will be of immense advantage to the health of the citizens. The cut for the drain to accomplish this desirable object, extending from Duncan's-gate, St. Ann's-wards, on the east, to the foot of Arthur-street on the west—a distance of 1,000 yards—is now excavating, and a great many men being employed, the work is proceeding with great spirit. The depth of the cut is twelve feet and the breadth ten feet. The dimensions of the drain to be built within it are five feet in height by two and a half feet in breadth, or thereby. The building of the drain is now begun. Mr. Lind is the contractor for this extensive work. We may also state that the powder magazine, in the Royal Park, is in the course of removal. We trust that the approaching visit of her Majesty to Scotland will have the effect of making the Commissioners of Woods and Forests accelerate their operations at Holyrood, so that our gracious Sovereign, on her subsequent visits to Scotland, may have a residence of her own, instead of being forced to live in the palace (however splendid) of one of her subjects.—*Edinburgh Evening Post.*

PROPOSED MONUMENT IN YORK CATHEDRAL TO THE LATE DR. BECKWITH.—A special meeting of the members of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society was held last week at the Museum, to take into consideration the expediency of making a grant from their funds towards the erection of a monument to the late Dr. Beckwith, who recently left a legacy of 10,000*l.* to that institution, and which it is said has already been paid. The Rev. W. W. Harcourt was called to the chair, who opened the business of the day by appropriate observations. Dr. Goldie moved that the sum of 50*l.* be granted for that purpose. Mr. Pritchett moved as an amendment, that the sum of 60*l.* be allowed. After remarks from several of the members, C. J. Hanson, Esq., moved that the sum of 100*l.* be granted. Some discussion then took place, and the amendment for 60*l.* was ultimately carried by a small majority. It is expected that this sum will be augmented by subscriptions from other institutions.

BRISTOL DOCK COMPANY.—A general meeting of the proprietors in this company was held at the White Lion, Bristol, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of widening the south Entrance Lock of Cumberland Basin. The recommendation of the directors to widen the lock to 54 feet was adopted. The drawings exhibit a lock of 54 feet in width by 245 in length, capable of admitting a vessel of the length of 211 feet above the water line; or of 237 feet from stem to stern; and with the improvement suggested by Mr. Brunel, by sloping the wall towards the top, a steamer of 62 feet can be admitted. Mr. Brunel is of opinion that the cost will not exceed 22,000*l.*, while to repair the present lock would require 17,000*l.*

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTURAL DRAWNERS.—The town members of this association celebrated their second anniversary by dining together at Freemasons' Tavern, on Monday last, the 2nd instant. In the course of the evening numerous portfolios of valuable drawings, as well as other interesting objects, were exhibited, affording a very agreeable and instructive entertainment to all present.

NEW SCHOOL AT CHILDERDITCH.—Through the exertions of the Rev. J. Lewis, jun., the pastor of Childerditch, a commodious school, in the Elizabethan style of architecture, is building in that parish, from a plan of Mr. Kendall's. Her Majesty the Queen Dowager has graciously contributed 20*l.* towards it, the Right Hon. Lord Petre, a like sum, and the Bishop of London 5*l.*

An immense new workhouse is about to be erected at Leeds, as, in the old edifice, very gross indecency and immorality prevail, in spite of every precaution taken by the officers.